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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between elementary teachers' theoretical knowledge about seatwork during reading instruction and students' on-task behavior. Subjects, 253 students and their 10 elementary teachers in an inner-city school in Ohio who used seatwork activities with the rest of the class while they worked in small reading groups, were administered a Student Engagement Rating and a Seatwork Procedures Observation. Results indicated that teachers did use theoretical knowledge about seatwork and that a significant difference existed across grade level in their use of such knowledge. Although there were indications of a relationship between teachers' use of knowledge about seatwork and students' on-task behavior, the findings were not significant. (Three tables and three figures of data are included; 36 references are attached.) (RS)

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The Relationship Between Elementary Teachers' Use of Theoretical Knowledge About Seatwork During Reading Instruction and Students' On-Task Behavior

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This manuscript is based on research done in the fall of 1988 for my doctoral dissertation at the Ohio State University. I received the PhD in June, 1989.

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Abstract

The study sought to determine if and to what extent a group of ten elementary teachers used theoretical knowledge about seatwork during reading instruction and to investigate the relationship between their use of such knowledge and students' on-task behavior. Results of the study showed that the teachers did use theoretical knowledge about seatwork and that a significant difference existed across grade level in their use of such knowledge. Although there were indications of a relationship between teachers' use of knowledge about seatwork and students' on-task behavior, the findings were not significant. The study is a first step in investigating the important phenomenon of seatwork; as such, it raises many questions for future research.

The Relationship Between Elementary Teachers' Use of Theoretical Knowledge About Seatwork during Reading Instruction and Students' On-Task Behavior

Gump (1967) describes two types of seatwork. The first type is supervised study during which time all students are assigned to work independently at their desks (the assignment may be in a specific subject area such as reading or different students may be working in several different subject areas) with their own materials while the teacher monitors. The teacher prepares the students for supervised seatwork activities by giving instructions and going through practice examples. The teacher monitors progress on assignments after releasing the students to work independently and follows up with appropriate feedback and reteaching when necessary. The second type of seatwork is independent work done by the students while the teacher is working with a group of students in another part of the room and is not available to continuously monitor the class. Such frequently is the case when reading is taught where usually the teacher collects and works with a small group of children functioning at a similar level while other pupils are given independent work assignments.

Brophy credits Kounin as being "one of the first to recognize that students often work independently rather than under the direct supervision of the teacher and that the appropriateness and interest value of the assigned work will influence the quality of task engagement (work involvement that can be observed) during these times" (Brophy, 1983, p. 267). Kounin (1970) investigated what teachers and students do during seatwork. He surmised that the behavior of teachers during seatwork was related to the behavior of students during seatwork. Thus Kounin claimed an association between student task engagement during seatwork and teacher behavior. Subsequent researchers have followed Kounin's procedures (Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, Clements, and Martin, 1981; Emmer, Sanford, Clements, and Martin, 1982; and Copeland, 1986).

Rosenshine (1980) states, " the allocation of a high percentage of time for seatwork is a necessity in current classrooms, the results suggest that seatwork activities are an integral and contributing part of classroom instruction, rather than trivial busywork" (p. 120). Rosenshine (1980) points out that 94% of seatwork assignments were meaningful and of an appropriate level of difficulty. He notes that student engagement time during seatwork is about 70%, compared to 84% during direct instruction. He suggests, however, that "if the teacher only worked with the class as a whole, the lower achieving students would be behind and the higher achieving students might be bored" (p. 119).

According to Anderson, Brubaker, Alleman-Brooks, and Duffy (1984), teachers have two major goals for seatwork: instructional and managerial goals. The instructional goals are (a) to have students "practice skills and concepts that are new or that are still being solidified," and (b) "to have students develop independent work skills," including learning to use resources (such as dictionaries), checking their work, and pacing themselves through a set of assignments. The managerial goals are (a) "to engage students in a task so they do not need the teacher's attention for a predictable period of time, so the teacher can work with a smaller number of students, and (b) "to have students engage in tasks that will not increase the noise and activity level during seatwork time, allowing them all to work without distraction" (p. 2).

A review of the limited research on seatwork reveals that three main factors influence the effectiveness of seatwork: the teacher, the students, and the content. These factors are inter-related; to a great extent, the students and the content are affected by the teacher.

Teacher Factors. A major finding of Kounin's videotape-based studies of elementary classrooms (1970) was that some dimensions of teacher behaviors made a difference in the behavior of pupils. He found positive correlations between the teacher variables: withitness, smoothness and momentum, valence, and variety and student work involvement and the pupil outcome variable, freedom from deviancy. Withitness means communicating to students that you

are aware of everything that is happening in the classroom. Withit teachers seem to have eyes in the back of their heads. Valence refers to a teacher's use of motivational comments. Smoothness and momentum involves keeping lessons and the group moving with smooth transitions and pacing instruction appropriately. Seatwork variety and challenge is the degree to which the student is presented with varied activities and task demands during the seatwork setting.

Emmer and Evertson (1982) found that effective teachers have well-planned systems for encouraging students to be responsible for completing seatwork. These systems include teacher clarity about work assignments and requirements, monitoring of work in progress, and giving immediate academic feedback. Findings of the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (BTES , Fisher, Berliner, Filby, Marliave, Cahen, and Dishaw, 1980) are similar to those of Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, (1980) and Emmer and Evertson (1982). For example, Fisher, et al. highlight the importance of the role of the teacher in making assignments. They found that in both reading and math, students tend to make fewer errors on daily tasks when teachers spend more time structuring the lesson and giving directions. It seems critical that students understand seatwork assignments if they are to respond correctly. Similarly, Rosenshine (1980) points out that student engagement during seatwork increases when there is substantive interaction between teacher and student during seatwork. Substantive interaction is defined as teacher monitoring the students and holding them accountable for work.

Student Factors. Kounin's research (1970) introduced the variables of student work involvement and student deviancy as a way of defining a teacher's degree of managerial success during the seatwork setting. For example, pupils of a withit teacher perceive her as knowing what is going on; consequently these students are more likely to remain involved in their work and to refrain from deviant behavior. Kounin categorized degrees of student work involvement as: definitely in the assigned work, probably in the assigned work, or definitely out of the assigned work. Student deviancy was categorized either as: not misbehaving, engaging in mild misbehavior, or engaging in serious misbehavior.

Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, Clements, and Martin (1981) and Emmer, Sanford, Clements, and Martin (1982) conducted experimental studies at the elementary and junior high school level using Kounin's idea of relating teacher behavior to student work involvement and freedom from deviancy. However instead of using the term freedom from deviancy as Kounin did, these researchers used on-task behavior and off-task behavior to identify students' work involvement and freedom from deviancy. The categories used for seatwork observations were definitely on-task (academic or procedural), probably on-task (academic and procedural), sanctioned off-task behavior, unsanctioned off-task behavior, dead time and cannot see.

Anderson et al. (1984) studied first-grade students' success in reading seatwork. Two distinct groups of students (four from each classroom) were identified for comparison: those whose responses were poor, characterized by low attention and low performance, and those whose responses were good, characterized by high attention and high performance. They found that all of the poor responders were members of the lower reading groups, and that the good responders were members of the higher reading groups. Poor and good responders also differed in terms of the fluency of their answers and the appropriateness of their work strategies. The investigators state, "seatwork was a qualitatively different experience for lower achievers than higher achievers" (p. 1). Additionally they note that gender does not predict a student's response to seatwork; they found an equal number of boys and girls in each category.

In the same study of first-graders, Anderson (1981) found that both high and low achievers "may believe that the most important aspect of doing their seatwork is simply to get it done" (p. 7). Students focus on doing the work, rather than on the content-related purposes of the assignment. Anderson hypothesizes that "the students' perceptions may be related to the information that they receive from teachers about their work. Very few teacher presentations include specific statements about the content-related purposes of assignments." (p 10)

Content Factors. Kounin's research (1970) dealt with the nature of the seatwork activities. "What are the groups of children required to do- what is the teacher moving them into and out of?" "Does the nature of the classroom activity relate to work involvement and deviancy?" (p.125) In regard to seatwork, Kounin found that valence, variety and challenge correlated positively with seatwork involvement and freedom from deviancy. Among the BTES findings, it is noted that students' Academic Learning Time (ALT) is directly related to their achievement. ALT is defined as "the amount of time a student spends engaged in an academic task that he can perform with high success. The more ALT a student accumulates, the more the student is learning" (Fisher et al., 1978 p. 8). Three levels of success are identified: high success, "where the student has a good grasp of the task and only makes occasional careless errors," medium success, which "involves partial understanding, where the student understands enough to produce some correct responses but also commits errors due to limitations in his understanding of the task," and low sucess, where "the student does not understand the task and makes correct responses at about the chance level" (p. 9). The BTES findings indicate that when students are expected to work on their own, success rates from 95% to100% are necessary. Brophy (1983) maintains that "students should not be burdened with busy work that involves no challenge at all, teachers should ensure that whatever new or more difficult challenges may be involved in seatwork tasks can be assimilated by the students (i.e., the students can complete the tasks with a high rate of success" (p. 268).

Due to the importance given to seatwork in the elementary school it is essential for elementary teachers to understand seatwork and theoretical knowledge that illuminates the phenomenon. According to Smith, Cohen, & Pearl (1969), "The teacher who is not theoretically trained will interpret events and objects in terms of common sense concepts that have come from experience... 'whereas the theoretically trained teacher will perform with a set of sophisticated concepts taken from the underlying disciplines of pedagogy as well as from the pedagogical field itself.'" (p. 45)

Ross (1984) notes that when researchers select instructional formats to study, one criterion should be to focus on those formats that are utilized most. Another criterion should be to select formats for study that are most difficult for teachers to manage. Ross states "although research clearly indicates that students spend most of their academic time in seatwork activities and that the engagement rate for this format is relatively low only recently have researchers begun to direct their attention to the study of seatwork." (P. 76)

Although seatwork is an ubiquitous classroom activity and there is some theoretical knowledge available relevant to effective seatwork practices, teachers may or may not have or use this seatwork knowledge when conducting seatwork in their classrooms. Further, there is no single compilation of theoretical knowledge about seatwork available for use by educators; neither has teacher behavior during seatwork been investigated in respect to the on-task rate of students. Therefore, the purposes of this study were: a) to seek to confirm whether or not the theoretical knowledge compiled by the investigator (Seatwork Procedures Observation instrument) is authentic i.e., do classroom teachers actually use the seatwork behaviors listed on the Seatwork Procrdures Observation (SPO) instrument, and b) to determine the relationship between teachers' use of such knowledge and students on-task behavior during seatwork activities. The specific research questions investigated are listed below.

1. Can the reliability of the Seatwork Procedures Observation (SPO) instrument be established in the study?

2. How reliable are the variables on the Student Engagement Rating (SER) instrument in portraying students' behavior during the seatwork setting?

3. Is there a relationship between teachers' use of theoretical knowledge about seatwork as identified by the SPO instrument and students' on-task behavior during seatwork?

4. Is there a difference across grade level in students' behavior during seatwork?

5. Is there a difference across grade level in teachers' use of theoretical knowledge about seatwork?

6. How does the use of theoretical knowledge about seatwork compare with the non-use of this knowledge in terms of teachers accomplishing seatwork goals(assignments completed, answers correct, students on-task)?

Method

Subjects

Subjects were ten elementary school teachers (volunteers) and their classes in an inner-city school in Ohio. All the teachers taught in self-contained classrooms and used seatwork activities with the rest of the class while they worked with small reading groups. Four teachers taught grade one and the other six teachers (two each) taught grades three, four, and five. There were nine females and one male. Nine of the teachers were white and one was black. Two teachers had four years of teaching experience, two had ten years, and the other six teachers had 9,16, 17, 20 , and 21 years of teaching experience respectively. There were 159 black students, 84 white students, and one Asian American student. Almost an equal number of females(128) and males (125) were in the study. A sizeable number of the students (121) were instructed at grade level in reading and nine of the students had special needs and were either serviced by special programs or waiting to be serviced by special programs. According to the principal, the overall student achievement level for the school was termed "below average" for the school district.

Instruments

The Student Engagement Rating(SER) instrument used to collect data on the students is shown in figure 1. It is a category system based on the Student Engagement

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Insert Figure 1 about here

Rating (SER) instrument used in studies conducted by Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, Clements, and Martin(1981) and Emmer, Evertson, Sanford, and Clements,1982). In the classroom format, the teacher presents to a small group with others in the class working independently : a) on the same task, b) on more than one task but within the same content area, c) on more than one task in more than one subject area, or d) students are focused on individual activities as teacher circulates and gives feedback before and/or between reading groups. Categories of student engagement are: a) on-task, academic- actively engaged in the activity, b) on-task, procedural- preparing to begin an activity, c) off-task, sanctioned-involved in an activity which is neither academic or procedural but is allowed in the classroom, d) off-task, unsanctioned- involved in behavior that is not allowed by the teacher, and e) dead-not involved in any activity.

The process used to develop the Seatwork Procedures Observation (SPO) instrument shown in figure 2 was to identify from the literature dimensions of effective

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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seatwork performance by classroom teachers along with indicators of these dimensions. These indicators of effective seatwork performance were then reduced to low inference behaviors (based on the research literature) to be used as a teacher observation instrument.

Five dimensions considered important in conducting effective seatwork were identified from the literature. They are as follows:

1. teacher provides instruction (Good & Grouws, 1977; Kounin, 1970; Fisher, Filby, Marliave, Cahon, Dishaw, Moore, & Berliner, 1978; Evertson, Emmer, & Brophy, 1980b; Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, Clements, & Martin, 1981; Emmer, Evertson, Sanford, & Clements, 1982);
2. teacher establishes a student routine (Stallings and Kasowitz, 1974; Stallings, Cory, Fairweather, & Needels, 1977, 1978; Evertson, Emmer, Clements, Sanford, & Worsham, 1984);

3. teacher monitors seatwork during small group instruction (Kounin, 1970; Anderson, Evertson, & Brophy, 1979; Evertson, et al., 1984);
4. teacher establishes a routine for herself (Fisher, Filby, Marliave, Cahon, & Dishaw, 1978; Stallings & Kaskowitz, 1974; Stallings, Cory, Fairweather & Needels, 1977, 1978); and
5. teacher holds students accountable (Kounin, 1970; Evertson, et al., 1984).

Each occurrence of the low inference behaviors listed on the SPO instrument was scored as follows: 1- never; 2-sometimes(at least one-third of the time); 3-often(two-thirds or more of the time); and 4-always. Each occurrence was to be marked to the left of the behavior. For example, if the teacher placed all assignments on the chalkboard, and there were four assignments, four plus signs and no minus signs would indicate a score of 4 for always. However, if only three of the assignments were placed on the chalkboard, the tallies would be + + + - and the score 3 for often. To say it another way, if the teacher assigned four seatwork activities, four assignments must be written on the board in order for the teacher to obtain a four (4) for this behavior. A minus sign indicates that the teacher failed to use the behavior as often as needed during the session. Each scoring session was independent of all other scoring sessions.

Additional information was gathered using the Seatwork Performance Survey (SPS) shown in figure 3. It was designed to gather information on the type and variety of

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Insert Figure 3 about here

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seatwork assigned, the level of proficiency attained by the students, the number of students assigned the seatwork, and the number of students completing the assignment. The classroom observer, with the help of the classroom teacher was to record the data asked for on the SPS after each observation session. A description of the assigned seatwork, the number of items per assignment, the number of correct responses, the number of students making the correct

responses, and the number of students completing the assignment were to be recorded on the form.

Procedures

Two doctoral students in education were trained as classroom observers to collect the data. (Examples of student seatwork behavior and a video using the behaviors on the SPO instrument were taped earlier to be used for training the observers.) A meeting with the volunteer teachers resulted in a workable observation schedule. The scheduled observation time was 60 minutes for fourth and fifth grades and 55 minutes for first and third grades. Three observers (including the investigator) collected the data over a two-week period. The observer did not participate in any of the classroom activities and therefore sat in a location that was not intrusive and did not invite conversation from the students. Classroom observations were scheduled during the time that the classroom teachers instructed small reading groups and had seatwork.

Only one problem was encountered during the data gathering process and that was with the Seatwork Performance Survey. It became obvious after a couple of days that the SPS forms were not being completed daily as planned, so the plans for collecting these forms were revised to give the teachers more time to fill out the forms. Original plans were to have the teacher and the observer complete the forms after each observation.

Even after revising the procedure for collecting the SPS forms, data on the students' response to seatwork (correct, incorrect, etc.) were difficult to obtain. There were several reasons for this: a) papers were not graded every day, b) students graded their own papers, c) some seatwork was not graded, and d) teachers took the papers home and graded them. (One teacher however, did have a unique system of grading seatwork daily: each student was coded for all correct, missing one, half or more, and unsuccessful). Eventually, the teachers were asked to only describe the daily seatwork assignments, give the number of students assigned the task, and the number of students completing the seatwork tasks. The SPS data were complete for all grades except one.

Results

The mean, standard deviation, and variance for each variable on the Seatwork Procedures Observation (SPO) instrument are presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Teacher provides instruction on the chalkboard and gives two or three short assignments occurred in most classrooms (3.85 and 3.8 respectively); whereas teacher designates a time out desk... or checked the seatwork papers... rarely occurred (1.4 and 1.625 respectively).

A test of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, (SPSS-X, 1986) was used to determine if the SPO instrument was reliable. A reliability coefficient of .7816 deemed the instrument reliable (question 1). The observational data on the teachers' use of theoretical knowledge about seatwork (40 observations) were subjected to factor analytic procedures. To determine the underlying factor structures, a common factor analysis model was used and the principal axis factors rotated to an orthogonal (varimax) rotation. As seen in Table 2, five factors emerged from this rotation.

Insert Table 2 about here

The factors were labeled: a) Teacher Monitoring, b) Rule Governed Behavior c) Teacher Direction, d) Teacher Clarity, and e) Teacher Withitness. With the exception of the factor, Teacher Holds Students Accountable (which did not appear after factor analysis), these five factors were compatible with the five original factors: a) Teacher Provides Instruction, b) Teacher Establishes a Student Routine, c) Teacher Monitors Seatwork During Small Group Instruction, d) Teacher Establishes a Routine for Herself, and e) Teacher Holds Students Accountable.

Reliability of the variables on the SER instrument (research question 2) was determined by submitting the SER data (dependent variables) to a two-way ANOVA (SAS, 1985 General Linear Model (GLM)using the independent variables, time interval and observers. Reliability of internal consistency was estimated using Coefficient Alpha based on the Hoyt (1941) formula below.

$$\sigma_a = \frac{1\text{-}MS_{res}}{MS_s}$$

Subscript a denotes the number of items, raters, observers, etc.

The reliability coefficients for the SER variables were: a) academic on-task, .9179; b) procedural on-task, .8114; c) sanctioned off-task, 0000; (indicates low occurrence of the behavior); d) unsanctioned off-task, .9081; and e) dead, 6506. Excluding sanctioned off-task behavior, the SER instrument was reliable in portraying students' seatwork behavior in the classroom.

The canonical correlation procedure was used to relate measures of teacher behavior during seatwork and small group instruction to measures of student behavior during seatwork(question 3). The first canonical correlation was not statistically significant in portraying a relationship between the Seatwork Procedures Observation (SPO) factors and the Student Engagement Rating (SER) variables. The first canonical correlation was .7075 and the squared canonical correlation was.5006. The probability level for the null hypothesis that all canonical correlations are zero in the population was only .1839 so no firm conclusions can be drawn since it is non-significant ($p < .05$).

The correlations between the seatwork procedure variables and the student engagement variables showed the factor, Teacher Monitoring, was weakly correlated with the procedural on-task variable (.3616) and the dead variable (-.3965). The negative correlation indicates that the more teacher monitoring, the less a student is uninvolved in a task (dead). The negative correlation between teacher clarity and academic on-task simply means that the instructor is not explaining or giving instructions because the student is interacting with the task. Overall, the statistical analyses revealed no significant relationship between the two instruments (SPO and SER).

Analysis of variance (SAS, GLM, 1985) of the SER variables was used to determine if there was a difference across grade level in students' behavior during seatwork (question 4). Although classes did differ as to on-task rates, the ANOVAS revealed no statistically significant differences across grade level in students' seatwork behavior.

The statistical procedure used to explore grade level differences in teachers' use of theoretical knowledge about seatwork (question 5) was the ANOVA (SAS, 1985). Only one factor, Teacher Withitness was found to be significantly different across grade level: F, (3, 36)= 3.32,< .05. Tukey's Studentized Range (HSD)= 1.036) at the .05 level showed that first grade teachers used more behaviors that indicated "Teacher Withitness" than did fourth grade teachers.

The seatwork performance survey (SPS) gathered information relative to the kind of seatwork assigned (subject area), to whom assigned, and the number of students completing the assignment. Data were compiled and entered into the computer as teacher ID, observer ID, grade, session, subject area (numbers were assigned in the following manner: 6) reading, 7) spelling, 8) math, 9) writing, 10) language, 11) art, and 12) journal), number of students assigned the seatwork, and the number of students that completed the seatwork. This data were used to determine if teachers were successful in accomplishing the seatwork goals of having students remain on task and complete their seatwork assignments. Four instructors had successful completion rates of 98%, 96%, 93%, and 100% for seatwork assignments. Other completion rates ranged from 72%-86%. The most assigned seatwork activities were in spelling and math. Reading and writing were the next most assigned subjects and language and art were the third most assigned subjects for seatwork. Little if any relationship was found between teachers' use of seatwork knowledge and students' on-task success or to the number of students completing the tasks.

Discussion

Instrumentation. The teachers in this study did indeed use theoretical knowledge about seatwork as outlined on the Seatwork Procedures Observation (SPO) instrument. Interestingly, the original factor, (before rotation) Teacher Provides Instruction, divided into two different factors which were labeled Teacher Direction and Teacher Clarity. Both of the new factors seem to indicate some type of instruction from the teacher; they differ however, in the nature of the instruction. For example, teacher direction indicates concise directions from the teacher concerning what is to be done whereas teacher clarity seems to indicate a thorough or patient teacher who takes as long as necessary to get the students to understand how something is to be done. Since teacher clarity and teacher direction both have support from the research literature concerning their importance to effective teaching, they are expected to appear in classrooms where teachers are using effective seatwork practices. It was not expected however, that they would surface as two different factors. The fact that they did may indicate that there is indeed a difference between a teacher giving directions and a teacher giving clear instructions.

Rarely was a teacher observed to check the assigned work during the day and return it to the students with feedback. Most teachers said the papers were checked and returned at a later time. The variable, teacher designates a time-out desk near her to be used for students who persist in misbehavior, did not occur. This was due in part to the fact that few discipline problems arose and those problems that did arise were handled differently. There were three other variables that were insignificant in their occurrence in the classroom: a) teacher circulates among the students providing feedback before leaving them to work on their own, b) students raise hand for help; she will go to them or they will come to her, and c) teacher suggests a sequence for doing work. The fact that these behaviors were not demonstrated in quantities large enough to be significant, does not mean that they were not worthwhile indicators of effective seatwork practice. They may in fact be extremely important to the execution of effective seatwork practices in the classroom.

Some parallels are found between teachers' use of theoretical knowledge about seatwork in this study and teachers' use of such knowledge in the related literature. For example, effective teachers of seatwork monitored students' progress carefully (Fisher, et al., 1978; Anderson, Evertson, and Brophy, 1979, Emmer, et al., 1981), structured and supervised seatwork (Stallings, et al., (1974, 1977, 1978; Anderson, et al., 1984) parallels teacher monitoring in this study. Fisher, et al., (1978) and Emmer, et al., (1981) found that effective teachers of seatwork established rules to govern behavior during seatwork and communicated assignments and instructions to students which is similar to teacher direction in this study. Teachers exhibited clarity: They gave clear and precise explanations during seatwork and asked questions to determine students' understanding (Emmer, et al., 1981 and Anderson, et al., 1984). As was the case in this research, Kounin (1970) found effective managers of seatwork were "withit" teachers: They faced both the reading group and seatwork students and started lessons quickly once the students were in the reading group (Anderson, et al., 1979).

The variables, academic on-task and procedural on-task, had high coefficients of .9179 and .8114 respectively. The high coefficients for on-task behavior were not surprising. It was surprising that sanctioned off-task behavior rarely occurred (reliability, 0000) in the classroom. An explanation for the infrequency of this variable is perhaps due to the timing (first period class when the children had already used the bathroom, sharpened their pencils, etc.). The reliability coefficient of the academic time on-task data in this study (.9179) compares favorably with the reliability coefficient of the time on-task data (.94) of Fitz-Gibbon & Clark (1982), different from Tobin's .62 (1986) and Moore's range of .56 to .95 (1984). Karweit and Slavin (1981) found reliability for average time on-task-class (TOT-C) was .95 and time on-task-pupil (TOT-P) was .72. They suggest that if data is to be analyzed by classroom, the entire class should be observed (as in this study).

Relationships between teachers' use of seatwork knowledge and students' on-task behavior. The factor Teacher Monitoring on the seatwork procedures

observation (SPO) instrument was found to have a positive (although weak .36) effect on the procedural on-task variable and a negative effect (.40) on the "dead" variable. This means that the seatwork behaviors: teacher encourages..., teacher gives feedback..., etc. are teaci behaviors which encourage students to prepare for academic tasks and discourage non-involvement in seatwork. Similarly, Rule governed behaviors: no talking..., only one at a time..., etc. are related to the on-task variables. Teacher withitness (teacher scans the room, faces both groups, etc.) also correlated with the on-task variables. Overall there were some indications that teachers' use of theoretical knowledge about seatwork predicted student on-task behavior. However, the findings were not statistically significant.

Other studies reviewed in this study have found positive relationships between teacher behavior and student behavior. For example, Kounin (1970) found that teachers who communicated to the students that they were aware of their behavior (withit) and teachers who attended to more than one behavior at a time (overlap) during seatwork, were successful in keeping students on-task (.50 and .38 respectively). Similar to the findings in this study, Anderson, Evertson, and Brophy (1979) found that certain teacher behaviors induced on-task behavior during seatwork and small group instruction. These behaviors were teacher faces both the small group and ..., scans the room..., and starts lessons quickly once the students are in the group. The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (Fisher, et al., 1978) found that high on-task behavior occurred in the classroom of teachers who monitored the students' seatwork and gave feedback.

Tobin (1986) used Product Moment Correlations to obtain a correlation of .77 ($p<.001$) between the teacher performance measures and the class average rates of student engagement. Good and Grouws (1975) found that student on-task behavior was high for those teachers who circulated to monitor progress during seatwork and Ebmeier and Ziomek (1983) found that holding students accountable was effective in maintaining task involvement for low achievers. These teacher behaviors did not appear after rotation of the SPO instrument in this study but they are believed to be important behaviors for teachers to

exhibit during seatwork. Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, Clements, and Martin (1981) found student call outs and student approaches teacher for help to be negatively correlated with on-task behavior. However, these behaviors rarely occurred in this research. In fact students seldom raised their hands for help; probably because they were not supposed to disturb the teacher while she was instructing a small reading group unless it was absolutely necessary.

Several reasons can be given for no statistically significant relationship between teachers' use of seatwork knowledge and students' on-task behavior. The most obvious reason is the small sample size of only ten teachers. This research study was modeled after other observational studies (Fisher, Filby, Marliave, Cahen, Dishaw, Moore, and Berliner, 1978; Fisher, Berliner, Filby, Marliave, Cahen, and Dishaw, 1980) and experimental studies (Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, Clements, and Martin,1981; Emmer, Sanford, Clements, and Martin, 1982) that looked at teacher behavior and student behavior in the classroom. The sample sizes in these studies were 41 second grade and 54 fifth grade teachers (Fisher, Filby, et al, 1978); twenty-one fifth grade and 25 second grade teachers (Fisher, Marliave, et al, 1980); forty teachers (Emmer, Sanford, Evertson, et al, 1981) and 38 teachers (Emmer, Sanford, Clements, et al, 1982). It is apparent that the small sample size limited the statistical power of the canonical correlation procedures. This statistical procedure (canonical correlation) for assessing the relationship between two or more sets of variables was not used in any of the previous studies but since this study is considered a beginning or model for what is envisioned as extensive research in the use of seatwork in the classroom, it was decided to use canonical correlation. It is believed that this study can be replicated using a larger sample size with statistically significant results.

Differences between teachers' use of seatwork knowledge and differences between students' on-task behavior. Teacher withitness was different across grade level. The indicators of this factor were: a) teacher faces both the small group and the seatwork group, b) starts lessons quickly once the students are in the group (have materials ready beforehand), c) scans the room frequently and

stops inappropriate behavior with eye contact or some form of non-verbal behavior. Surprisingly, no small group instruction was used in one fourth grade classroom therefore none of the behaviors indicative of "teacher withitness" were observed. (In contrast, all the seatwork behaviors for teacher "withitness" were used by first grade teachers.) The instructor in one fourth grade class, however, did instruct small reading groups in the rear of the classroom. Although this instructor started lessons quickly once the students were in the groups, no other behaviors indicative of Teacher "Withitness" were used.

Analysis of variance revealed no statistically significant differences across grade level in students' seatwork behavior. However visual inspection of the data revealed a difference between students on-task rates across grade level: grade 1 (.7632) ; grade 3 (.7896); grade 4 (.9203); and grade 5 (.8770). Similar differences were found in other studies: McIntyre, Copenhaver, Byrd, and Norris (1983) reported engagement rates of 77%, 75%, and 73% for grades 3, 5, and 7 respectively and as grade level increased , student engagement decreased. The authors state that the reason for the decrease may be that problems assigned during seatwork become progressively more difficult as one progresses through the grade levels. Similarly, Seifert and Beck Jr., (1984) found time on-task for secondary algebra students was 54% in a 28 minute segment. The researchers state that secondary school instruction appears to be more susceptible to off-task influences than elementary school instruction. The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (Rosenshine, 1980) reported that second grade students (high, average, and low) had engagement rates of 82%, 71%, and 72% respectively. Fifth grade students had engagement rates of 82%, 79%, and 69%.

Teacher Success in Accomplishing Seatwork Goals. Some behaviors listed on the SPO instrument did not occur in classrooms that were unusually orderly and well organized. The students in these rooms needed few directions and prompts from the teacher. It was pointless to use some of the theoretical knowledge about seatwork with these students. For example, the teacher did not need to suggest a sequence for doing work or circulate among the students

providing feedback before leaving them to work on their own because the students seemed to be capable of handling the assignment. Also, since time was allowed for all students to use the bathroom and sharpen their pencils before class began, these behavior did not occur.

One teacher needed to use theoretical knowledge about seatwork and did not.

Seatwork activities were conducted based on trial and error and/or craft knowledge. Reading groups were interrupted by students who did not understand the assignments or by those who wanted to know what to do with completed assignments. The noise level was high, the teacher screamed to get the class quiet, and then the cycle was repeated.

All but one class in this study was on task at .70 and above and the on-task mean for all grades was approximately 84%. This on-task rate is somewhat higher than the on-task rates in other studies such as: 75% (Gump, 1967); 65% (Kounin, 1970); 68% (Rosenshine, 1980). The high on-task rate for this group of students reflect the nature of the study. The study was organized, structured and specific: Classroom observers were only interested in teacher and student behavior during seatwork.

The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (Fisher, 1978) notes that when students are expected to work on their own, success rates from 95% to100% are necessary and Brophy (1983) suggests that students should be able to complete the seatwork with a high rate of success. Thus, rate of seatwork completion was used as a proxy for rate of success and .90 was selected to denote success. In other words, an instructor whose students competed 90% of the assigned tasks was successful in accomplishing the seatwork goal of having students complete the seatwork assignments.

The low seatwork completion rates for Instructor O (.75) and Instructor S (.71) in Table 3 reflect a disparity in the instructors methods of counting. The seatwork

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Insert Table 3 about here

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activity of writing in an individual journal is a continuous activity and is not completed daily. Instructor O and instructor S counted this as an assignment (writing in journal) which students did not complete and it caused their completion rates to be lowered. The other low rates of seatwork completion are not explained by the data; evidently they refect the true count of the number of students completing the assignments. Because the correctness of the task was not involved, the seatwork completion rates for all the instructors in this study should have been 98%-100%.

There are clear indications from this study that the area of teacher and/or student accountabilty in seatwork is quite deficient and in need of improvement. Two original behaviors for the factor, Teacher Holds Students Accountable did not have significant loadings but they appear to be extremely important for getting students to complete their seatwork. These behaviors are: a) teacher establishes rules for collecting papers and designates a place for students to put all papers (e.g. a labeled box or folder, on the teacher's desk, etc.) and b) teacher checks the seatwork papers so that they can be returned to the students with feedback.

To reiterate, the findings of this study are listed below.

1. Elementary teachers in this study used theoretical knowledge about seatwork during reading instruction. The research-based SPO instrument was reliable in portraying teachers' use of seatwork knowledge during reading instruction.
2. The SER instrument was effective in capturing the behavior of the seatwork students.
3. There were indications of a relationship (not significant) between teachers' use of seatwork knowledge and students' on-task behavior.
4. Students' rate of on-task behavior (although different across grade level) was not significant.
5. There was a significant difference across grade level in teachers' use of theoretical knowledge about seatwork. That is, first grade teachers were found to use the seatwork behaviors indicative of the factor Teacher "Withitness more than fourth grade teachers.

6. Teachers differed in how successful they were in getting students to complete seatwork assignments. Their use or non-use of theoretical knowledge about seatwork however, had little relationship to on-task success or to the number of students completing the seatwork assignments.

Information from this study may be used in several ways. First, the information may be used to determine whether teachers, in fact, use good seatwork practice according to the research-based SPO instrument. Second, findings from the study may be used to inform the field of teacher education as to possible curriculum content. That is, What knowledge about seatwork gained from the study should preservice/inservice teachers have an opportunity to learn? Third, it may be used to support effective seatwork practices that teachers are already using and provide additional practices for them to use. The effective practices that teachers use can be highlighted, the ineffective ones can be abolished, and the teachers can add additional effective seatwork practices to their repertoire of seatwork knowledge. Fourth, teachers and outside observers (principals, supervisors, peers) are provided with a reliable systematic instrument to be used for evaluating seatwork in the classroom. The Seatwork Procedures Observation (SPO) instrument can be used to assess teacher behavior and the Student Engagement Rating (SER) instrument can be used to assess student on-task behavior. Fifth, inservice programs on how seatwork is used in the classroom may be conducted. Sixth, school officials may want to continue this line of research (investigating instructional strategies and formats used in the classroom) by checking periodically on the quality and effectiveness of seatwork, thus starting a trend which may extend into other areas such as recitation, discussion,cooperative learning, etc.

This study is a first step in investigating the important phenomenon of seatwork. As such, it raises many questions for future research. For example: To what extent is seatwork meaningful and at an appropriate level of difficulty? What are students' perception of and attitude toward seatwork assigned during reading? What is the primary reason(s) seatwork is assigned during reading (instructional or managerial)? What is the relationship between seatwork and student achievement?

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Variables on the Seatwork Procedures Observations (SPO) Instrument

Variables	Means	Standard Deviations
Teacher provides instruction		
1. on the chalkboard	3.85	.662164
2. orally	3.575	.98417
3. two or three short assignments	3.8	.723241
4. for getting materials	3.175	1.21713
5. suggests a sequence for doing work	3.325	1.16327
6. goes over one or more of the exercises with the students to make sure they understand the task and the response	3.45	1.03651
7. circulates among the students providing feedback before leaving them to work on their own		
Teacher establishes a student routine		
8. no talking unless given permission	2.925	1.3085
9. raise hand for help; she/he will go to them or they will come to her	2.5	1.39596
10. only one at a time may sharpen a pencil, get supplies, or use the bathroom	2.625	1.44449
11. if seatwork is completed before the next scheduled activity, students may read, write in their journal, draw, or color	2.925	1.36603

(table continues)

Variables	Means	Standard Deviations
Teacher monitors seatwork during small group instruction		
12. faces both the small group and the seatwork group	3.025	1.38652
13. starts lessons quickly once the students are in the group (have materials ready beforehand)	3.25	1.25576
14. scans the roomfrequently and stops inappropriate behavior with eye contact or some form of non-verbal behavior	2.8	1.3265
15. designates a time out desk near her/him to be used for students who persist in misbehavior	1.4	.955416
Teacher establishes a routine for her/himself		
16. does not call another group immediately after she/he finishes working with one group but checks on the seatwork students	2.325	1.42122
17. gives feedback to students who are off-task	2.7	1.3625
18. encourages those students who are working without any problem	2.175	1.35661
19. monitors the seatwork of those students who have just left the small group to be sure they begin their activity promptly	1.975	1.32988

Teacher holds students accountable		
20. designates a deadline for all work to be turned in (e.g., before lunch, before recess, before the end of the school day, etc.)	2.4	1.44648
21. establishes rules for collecting papers and designates a place for students to put all papers (e.g., a labeled box or folder, on the teacher's desk, etc.)	2.875	1.3994
22. checks the seatwork papers so they can be returned to the students with feedback	1.625	1.10215

Table 2

Factors, Variables, and Loadings Resulting From Orthogonal Rotation of the Seatwork Procedures (SPQ) Instrument

Factor I. Teacher Monitoring	Factor loadings
16. does not call another group immediately after she/he finishes working with one group but checks on the seatwork students	.72
17. gives feedback to students who are off-task	.74
18. encourages those students who are working without any problem	.80
19. monitors the seatwork of those students who have just left the small group to be sure they begin their activity promptly	.80
Factor II. Rule Goverened Behavior	
8. no talking unless given permission	.78
10. only one at a time may sharpen a pencil, get supplies, or use the bathroom	.78
11. if seatwork is completed before the next scheduled activity, students may read, write in their journal, draw, or color	.55
20. designates a deadline for all work to be turned in (e.g., before lunch, before recess, before the end of the school day, etc.)	.50

(table continues)

Factor III. Teacher Direction	Factor loadings
1. on the chalkboard	.90
3. two or three short assignments	.96
Factor IV. Teacher Clarity	
2. provides instruction orally	.80
4. for getting materials	.63
6. goes over one or more of the exercises with the students to make sure they understand the task and the response	.62
Factor V. Teacher Withitness	
12. faces both the small group and the seatwork group	.74
13. starts lessons quickly once the students are in the group (have materials ready beforehand)	.57
14. scans the room frequently and stops inappropriate behavior with eye contact or some form of non-verbal behavior	.61

Table 3

Percentage of Students in Each Grade Completing Seatwork Assigned by Instructor According to Type of Activity

Instructor	Grade	Type of Activity*							Total
		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
D	1	99%	100%	100%	97%	95%	98%		98%
E	1	48%	77%	86%	92%		32%	93%	71%
M	4	100%		96%		98%	96%		96%
O	3	90%	86%		95%	83%	94%	00%	75%
Q	5	58%	71%	99%					76%
S	3			88%	88%	79%		28%	71%
V	1	95%	95%	93%	88%		98%		93%
X	1	87%	78%	86%	89%		91%		86%
Y	5		100%	40%	96%				72%

* 6) reading, 7) spelling, 8) math, 9) writing, 10) language, 11) art, 12) journal

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT RATINGS
Revised Version

Teacher#_____ School#_____ Observer#_____ Date_____ AM PM
#of Students_____ Grade_____ Subject_____

Time						
Format						
# in seatwork						
# on, acad.						
# on, proc.						
# off, sanc.						
# off, unsanc.						
# dead						

GUIDELINES FOR USING THE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT RATINGS

On the task rates and the amount of unsanctioned, off task student behavior are to be assessed using the Student Engagement Rating (SER) instrument. Beginning after the first 10 minutes of each observation, and thereafter every five minutes, observers are to observe the behavior of the students for a maximum of two minutes and then record the behavior. Use the SER form to record the number of students in the seatwork setting who are engaged in academic or procedural activities or who are off task, or in dead time. The number in the seat work setting should be the sum of the numbers in the five categories.

Subject_____ Grade____ Date_____
Time_____ Observer_____

Does occur +
Does not occur -

The Seatwork Procedure Observation(SPO) Instrument

	Never	Sometimes(1/3)	Often(2/3)	Always(100%)
Teachers provides instructions 1. on the chalk board				
2. orally				
3. two or three short assignments				
4. for getting materials				
5. suggests a sequence for doing work				
6. goes over one or more of the exercises with the students to make sure they understand the task and the reponse				
7. circulates among the students providing feedback before leaving them to work on their own				
Teacher establishes a student routine 8. no talking unless she gives them permission				
9. raise hand for help; she will go to them or they will come to her				
10. only one at a time may sharpen a pencil, get supplies or use the bathroom				
11. if seatwork is completed before the next scheduled activity, students may read, write in their journals, draw or color				
Teacher monitors seatwork during small group instruction				
12. faces both the small group and the seatwork group				
13. starts lessons quickly once the students are in the group(have materials ready beforehand)				
14. scans the room frequently and stops inappropriate behavior with eye contact or some form of non-verbal behavior				
15. designates a time-out dest near her to be used for students who persist in misbehavior				
Teacher establishes a routine for herself 16. does not call another group immediately after she has finished working with one small group but checks on the seatwork students				
17. gives feedback to students who are off task				
18. encourages those students who are working without any problem				
19. monitors the seatwork of those students who have just left the small group to be sure they begin their activity promptly				
Teacher holds students accountable 20. designates a deadline for all work to be turned in (e.g. before lunch, before recess, before the end of the school day, etc.)				
21. establishes rules for collecting papers and designate a place for students to put all papers (e.g. a labeled box or folder, on the teacher's desk, etc.)				
22. checks the seatwork papers so they can be returned to the students with feedback				

figure 2

Seatwork Performance Survey

The observer, with the help of the classroom teacher is to record theis data after each observation session. First, a description of the seatwork assignment is to be given. Second, the total number of items per assignment is to be recorded on the form. Third, the number of correct responses made by the students is to be recorded(top number) along with the number of students making the correct responses(bottom number). For example, if the total number of items is 20, and five correct responses were given by seven students, five would be the top number and seven would be the bottom number of students completing the assignment.

Seatwork Performance Survey

Please fill in the information below for each observation session.

Grade____ Date__ Session No. _____
Observer_____

Description of seatwork	total items	No. correct responses	No. given assign.	No. comp. assign.

Figure 3